

Spectrum



Siobhan Carlile
Signal Staff

Fort Gordon will plant four oak trees to commemorate Arbor Day at 11 a.m. today at Heritage Park, on Rice Road and Lane Ave.

Two live oaks and two sawtooth oak trees will be planted in the park area. The garrison commander will be assisted by students from Freedom Park Elementary School and a representative of Augusta-Richmond County.

Future plans call for the planting of 50-60 trees in Heritage Park. New shrubs, lighting, benches, sidewalks and a gazebo are also planned for the park, located at the intersection of Avenue of the States, Rice Rd. and Lane Ave.

The first Arbor Day was celebrated in 1872 in Nebraska as a special day for planting trees and has grown to thousands of celebrations in communities across our nation. Fort Gordon is fortunate to have forest resources that cover 77 percent of the installation.

Since that first Arbor Day people all over the world have planted trees in their yards and in their communities, caring for them, and learning about their value. The celebration of Arbor Day gives you an opportunity to learn about trees and take positive action to make the world a better place.

Many studies have shown how trees enhance our quality of life. Trees remove or trap lung-damaging dust, ash, pollen and smoke from the air, in addition to providing shade for people and conserving energy. In exchange for giving oxygen; trees absorb carbon dioxide produced from the combustion of various fuels. A tree can absorb and store an annual average of 13 pounds of carbon each year. And one acre of trees produces enough oxygen for 18 people every day. Trees act as natural water filters and help significantly slow the movement of storm water, which lowers total runoff volume, soil erosion and flooding. During a heavy rain, a healthy forest can absorb as much as 20,000 gallons of water in an hour.

The presence of trees in a community affects the cost of municipal services, energy consumption and the quality of life. Strategically placed trees around a building can reduce summer cooling costs by as much as 30%, while winter heating costs can be reduced by a similar percentage by the use of trees as windbreaks. Urban noise is reduced by trees absorbing sound waves. And trees provide wildlife habitats for many species.

Office and industrial areas within green, wooded settings are in high demand by employers because employee life enhancement studies show that shady areas to eat and walk during lunch and breaks translates into more stress-free, productive employees. Workers without a view of nature from their desks reported 23% more instances of illnesses than those with a view of greenery.

Trees give us products such as: chewing gum, crayons, soap, shatterproof glass, suntan lotion, cork, dyes, life-saving drugs, and writing paper as well as improve our environment. For everyone who cares about trees, Arbor Day, is a day to celebrate.

Fort Gordon has been named a Tree City USA community by the Arbor Day Foundation to honor its commitment to community forestry. It is the 15th year Fort Gordon has received this national recognition.

The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service.

Fort Gordon has met the four standards to become a Tree City USA community: a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, a comprehensive community forestry program, and an Arbor Day observance.

"Trees in our cities and towns help clean the air, conserve soil and water, moderate temperature and bring nature into our daily lives", said John Rosenow, Chief Executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "Tree City USA designation recognizes the work of elected officials, staff and citizens who plant and care for the community forest. Trees are a vital component of the infrastructure in our cities and towns and provide environmental and economical benefits. A community, and its citizens, that recognize these benefits and provide needed care for its trees deserves recognition and thanks."



Photos by Siobhan Carlile

Studies have shown how trees enhance our quality of life.



Soldiers run errands and physical training under the shade of oak trees at Barton Field.



Heritage Park is teeming with blooms that are at their prime just in time for Arbor Day today.